



Susan Bysiewicz
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

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For more information:
Derek Slap: (860) 509-6255
Cell: (860) 573-2019

- NEWS RELEASE -

THE NUMBER OF FEMALE CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR & 1ST SELECTMAN IS ON THE RISE

SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ CELEBRATES 25% JUMP IN FEMALE CANDIDATES FOR TOP LOCAL OFFICE COMPARED TO ONE DECADE AGO

Hartford: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today announced that the number of female candidates for municipal top office is on the rise, as evidenced by the percentage of female candidates listed on the current roster for the upcoming general election.

The number of women who are candidates in the November general election for mayor or first selectman is 59 out of 278 total candidates - or roughly 20% of the field. There were 52 female candidates (10% less than currently running) in the 2005 general election and just 44 female candidates (25% less) for mayor or first selectman in 1997.

“It is great news that more women are running for mayor and first selectman,” said Secretary Bysiewicz. “Both major political parties, the Women’s Campaign School at Yale University, and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) deserve credit for their work in recruiting women.”

This percentage of women running for mayor or first selectman in 2007 mirrors the percentage of top offices currently held by women. Women serve as mayor or first selectman in 34 of the 169 towns and cities in Connecticut – or roughly 20%. (Statistics cited here do not reflect write-in candidates because the window to file as a write-in candidate remains open).

“The number of women involved in local politics appears to be on the rise but gender equality at town hall remains an elusive goal in Connecticut,” said Bysiewicz. “Despite comprising more than half the electorate, women make up only about 20% of the candidates - and eventual winners - when it comes to the top office in our cities and towns. We should all be concerned that women are so woefully represented and look for ways to encourage more women to run for office.”

“Women are inching their way into town elected positions at relatively small numbers however; women have long served their communities in a variety of roles. In reality we need more women to move their involvement from the PTA to town hall,” commented Teresa Younger, Executive Director of the PCSW. “The need for younger generations to see women in leadership roles is critical for developing the next generation of female leaders. We applaud those women who have put themselves out there to run for elected office and encourage more women to do so. The PCSW has a bumper sticker that says “It’s a man’s world unless women vote” and now we should add and “run for office,” says Younger.

The latest list of candidates for mayor and first selectman also reveals that the number of uncontested local races is declining. Eighteen percent - or 24 out of 131 - of the races for mayor and first selectman are uncontested, as opposed to 30 in 2005. In previous years the number of uncontested top races in municipal elections has ranged from 20% (30 uncontested races) in 2005 to as high as 30% (44 uncontested races) in 1999.

“Competition among candidates can generate new ideas, energy, and ultimately more choices for voters,” said Secretary Bysiewicz. “In order to keep lowering the number of uncontested races, our political parties and community organizers must look for new and innovative ways to recruit candidates.”

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